



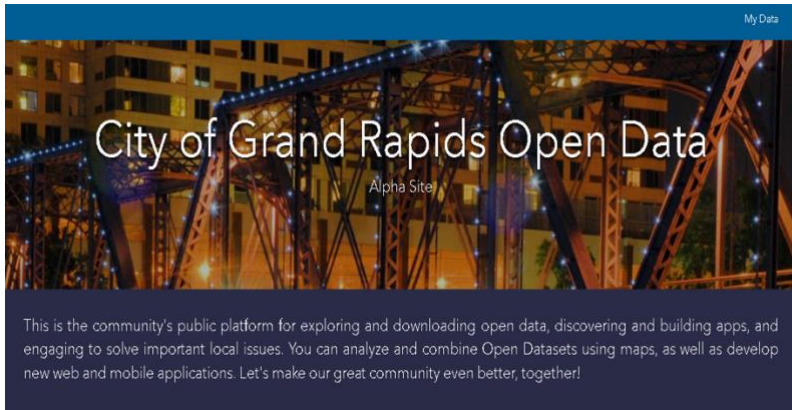
MEDIA RELEASE

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Grand Rapids selected to join national What Works Cities initiative

City joins 99 others committed to making city government more effective using data and evidence

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – Mayor Rosalynn Bliss today announced the City of Grand Rapids was selected as one of five new cities to participate in Bloomberg Philanthropies' national What Work Cities initiative – one of the largest-ever philanthropic efforts to enhance the use of data and evidence in the public sector. Grand Rapids will receive technical assistance from world-class experts to build its capacity to address local issues using data and evidence. Grand Rapids is the first city in the state of Michigan to be selected for the initiative.

Grand Rapids will improve and advance its ability to treat data as a strategic asset, leveraging it more effectively for reliable insights and more efficient service provision. The City will deliver results by strengthening its data systems and processes, ensuring a culture of using data and evidence. Grand Rapids will invest in its data management and open data practices to help increase equity and the quality of life in the city, enabling progress toward the community's goals and connecting with the community in the process.

Grand Rapids' selection, along with that of Columbia, S.C., Honolulu, Hawaii, Irving, Texas, and Long Beach, Calif., was announced today by What Works Cities and Results for America, one of the initiative's five partner organizations and the campaign manager.

“When cities know how to put data at the core of their decision-making, they’re equipped with the tools to best solve local challenges and serve their communities,” said Simone Brody, executive director of What Works Cities. “We’re excited to welcome these five cities and very proud to reach our goal of working with 100 cities across the United States.”

With today’s new participating cities, What Works Cities is now partnering with 100 cities that are home to more than 31 million residents and have annual budgets exceeding \$104 billion.

“We are proud to be a What Works city,” Mayor Bliss said. “Our partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies will strengthen our commitment to ensuring fair and equitable distribution of City services, resources and assets across the community. The goal of this work is to promote community engagement and increase quality of life through additional assessment and review with our external stakeholders.”

With support from a consortium of expert partners, cities participating in the What Works Cities initiative are identifying more effective ways to evaluate programs and improve performance, optimize resources to serve their communities, and address a range of social challenges – from public safety to affordable housing. What Works Cities participants also join the initiative’s extensive learning network of local leaders and global experts actively sharing best practices for outcomes and focused governance.

Grand Rapids will improve open data practices to make municipal data more accessible and engage residents around government priorities and services. The City will work with What Works Cities partners to focus on developing an equity-based dataset inventory, open data portal and standards to work with community stakeholders to leverage available datasets.

The City will develop the capacity to conduct low-cost evaluations of programs so managers have better information to make changes and improve results for online digital services.

The consortium of expert organizations assembled by Bloomberg Philanthropies to deliver support to cities comprises the Behavioral Insights Team, the Center for Government Excellence at Johns Hopkins University, the Government Performance Lab at the Harvard Kennedy School, Results for America and the Sunlight Foundation.

The five new cities joining What Works Cities today follow 95 cities already participating in the initiative. They are Albuquerque, N.M.; Anchorage, Alaska; Arlington, Texas; Athens, Ga.; Augusta, Ga.; Baltimore, Md.; Baton Rouge, La.; Birmingham, Ala.; Boise, Idaho; Boulder, Colo.; Buffalo, N.Y.; Bellevue, Wash.; Boston, Mass.; Cambridge, Mass.; Cape Coral, Fla.; Cary, N.C.; Charleston, S.C.; Chattanooga, Tenn.; Charlotte, N.C.; Columbia, S.C.; Corona, Calif.; Denton, Texas; Denver, Colo.; Des Moines, Iowa; Downey, Calif.; Durham, N.C.; Fargo, N.D.; Fayetteville, N.C.; Fort Collins, Colo.; Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Fort Worth, Texas; Gilbert, Ariz.; Glendale, Ariz.; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Greensboro, N.C.; Gresham, Ore.; Hartford, Conn.;

Hayward, Calif.; Independence, Mo.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Irving, Texas; Jackson, Miss.; Kansas City, Kan.; Kansas City, Mo.; Knoxville, Tenn.; Laredo, Texas; Las Vegas, Nev.; Lewisville, Texas; Lexington, Ky.; Lincoln, Neb.; Little Rock, Ark.; Long Beach, Calif.; Louisville, Ky.; Madison, Wis.; Memphis, Tenn.; Mesa, Ariz.; Miami, Fla.; Milwaukee, Wis.; Minneapolis, Minn.; Modesto, Calif.; Naperville, Ill.; Nashville, Tenn.; New Haven, Conn.; New Orleans, La.; Norfolk, Va.; Oklahoma City, Okla.; Olathe, Kan.; Orlando, Fla.; Portland, Ore.; Providence, R.I.; Raleigh, N.C.; Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.; Riverside, Calif.; Salinas, Calif.; Salt Lake City, Utah; San Francisco, Calif.; San Jose, Calif.; Seattle, Wash.; Scottsdale, Ariz.; Saint Paul, Minn.; Sioux Falls, S.D.; South Bend, Ind.; Syracuse, N.Y.; Tacoma, Wash.; Tempe, Ariz.; Topeka, Kan.; Tulsa, Okla.; Tyler, Texas; Victorville, Calif.; Virginia Beach, Va.; Waco, Texas; Washington, D.C.; West Palm Beach, Fla.; Wichita, Kan.; and Winston-Salem, N.C.

For more information:

The report “What Works Cities: How Local Governments Are Changing Lives” summarizes cities’ accomplishments with the initiative. For more information, visit whatworkscities.org.

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